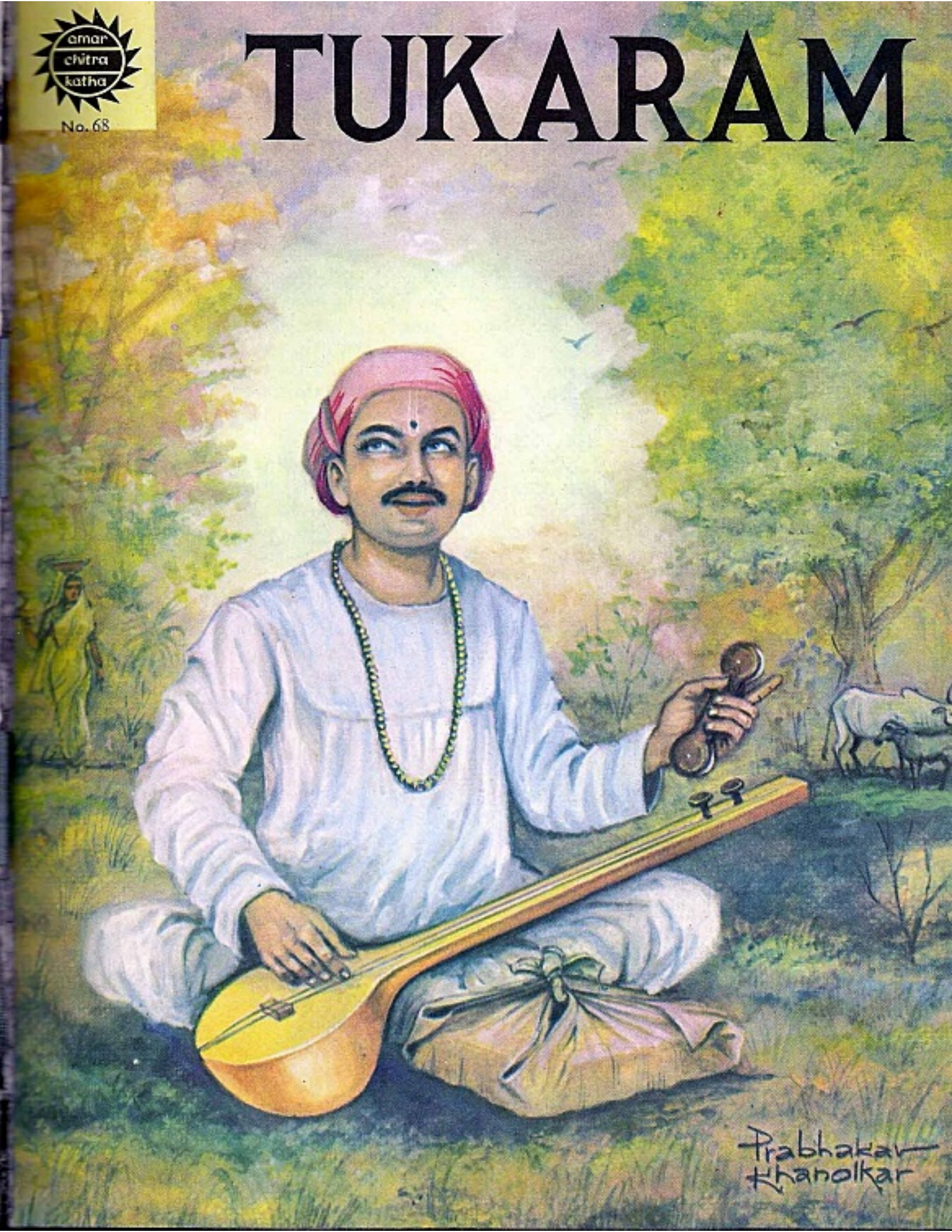


TUKARAM



Prabhakar
Khanolkar

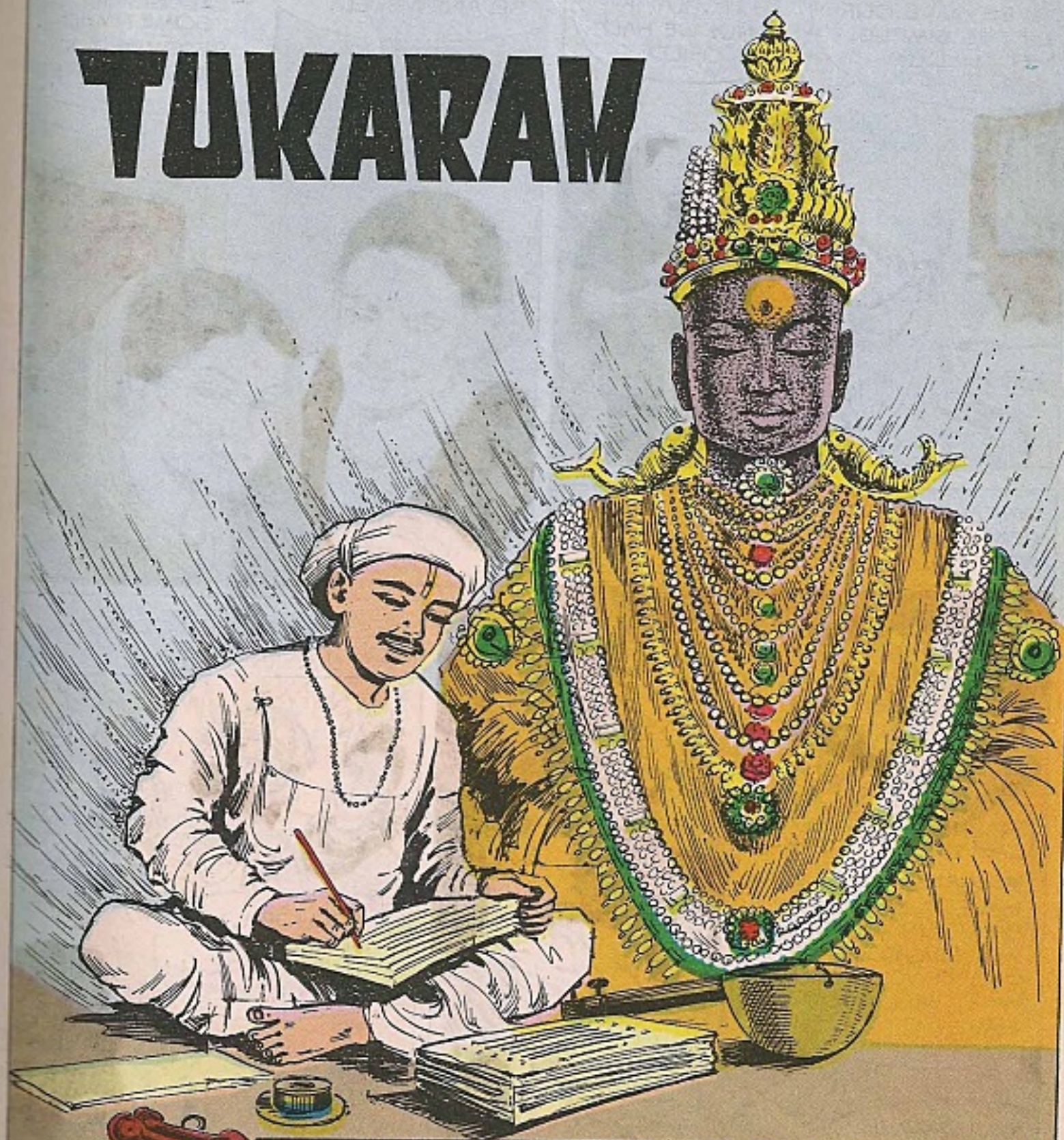
Maharashtra has an enviable legacy of mystics and saints. But few of them unlike the saints elsewhere were from the socially elite. Quite the contrary. In affluence, if not in caste or occupation, they were all of humble origin. Tukaram, whom many consider the crown of this mystic tradition, was no exception. He was a commoner in every sense of the word. Neither was he a Brahman nor was he a scholar. He was in fact a shop-keeper for much of the early part of his life. It is his very commonness, which makes him the model for all of us who would embark on the path of spiritual achievements. It is inspiring even as it is challenging.

The path to spiritual bliss was by no means an easy one for Tukaram. He had to fight hard and long against human frailties like pride, anger and desire. His allies were sustained effort and unflinching faith.

Perhaps the only native asset that Tukaram started with was a streak of poetry. His poetry though simple is grand in its simplicity. Not for him, the intellectualisms of metaphysical poets. His Abhangs have the simplicity and the grandeur of a mountain-peak. That is why his poems are an integral part of living Maharashtra.

We have based our story on popular legends and not on any one particular version.

TUKARAM

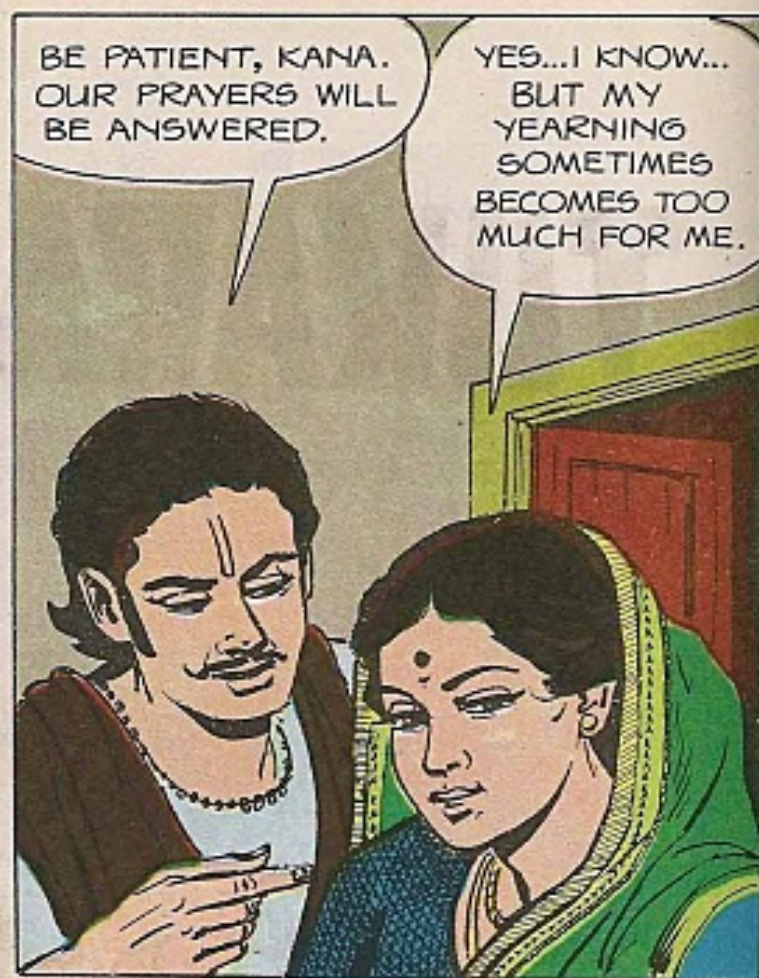


TUKARAM WAS THE SON OF BOLHOBA, A FARMER BY BIRTH, WHO HAD CHOSEN THE PROFESSION OF A GROCER. BOLHOBA AND HIS WIFE KANABAI LIVED IN DEHU, A VILLAGE NEAR POONA. THEY MADE REGULAR PILGRIMAGES TO PANDHARPUR TO PRAY FOR THE ONE BLESSING THEY LACKED IN LIFE - A CHILD.



KANA, IT IS GOOD TO BE ALIVE. OUR LIFE IS SIMPLE, YET FULL OF PEACE.

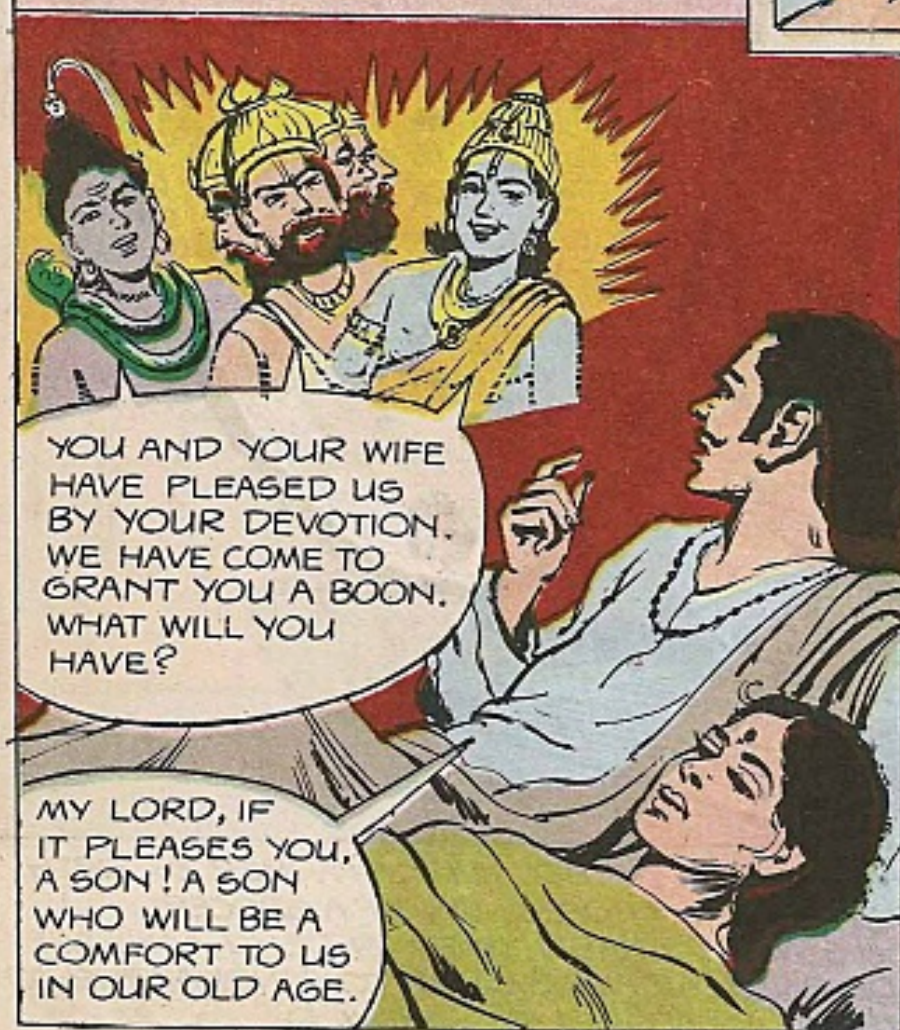
YES, MY LORD. BUT... BUT IF ONLY WE HAD A CHILD.



BE PATIENT, KANA. OUR PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED.

YES... I KNOW... BUT MY YEARNING SOMETIMES BECOMES TOO MUCH FOR ME.

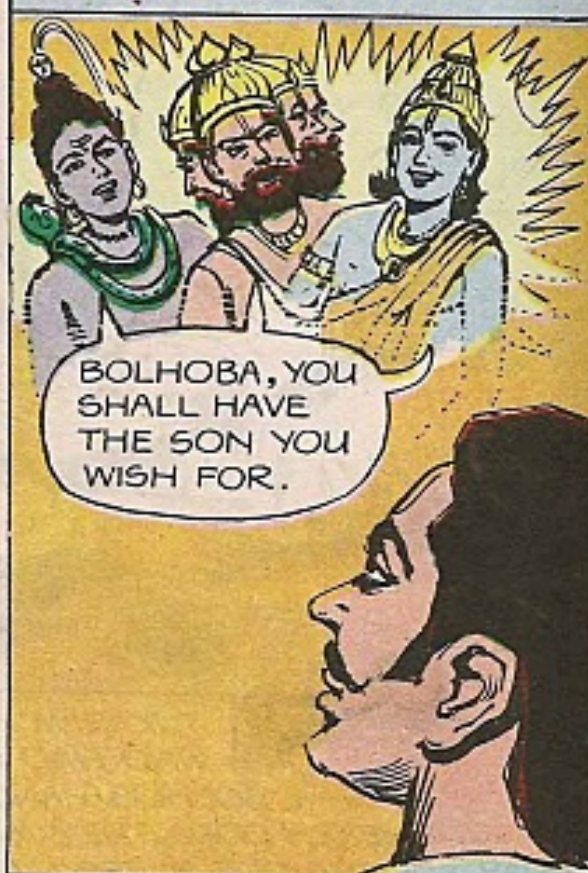
THAT NIGHT, BOLHOBA'S FAITH WAS REWARDED. SHIVA, BRAHMA, AND VISHNU CAME TO HIM IN A VISION.



YOU AND YOUR WIFE HAVE PLEASED US BY YOUR DEVOTION. WE HAVE COME TO GRANT YOU A BOON. WHAT WILL YOU HAVE?

MY LORD, IF IT PLEASES YOU, A SON! A SON WHO WILL BE A COMFORT TO US IN OUR OLD AGE.

THE DEVAS WERE SILENT FOR A WHILE. THEN -



BOLHOBA, YOU SHALL HAVE THE SON YOU WISH FOR.

BOLHOBA COULD NOT CONTROL HIS EXCITEMENT.

KANA! KANA! WAKE UP!
WE HAVE BEEN
PROMISED A SON!
SHIVA, VISHNU, BRAHMA...

UH? UH?
WHAT? A SON?
HOW? SHIVA?
VISHNU?
BRAHMA?



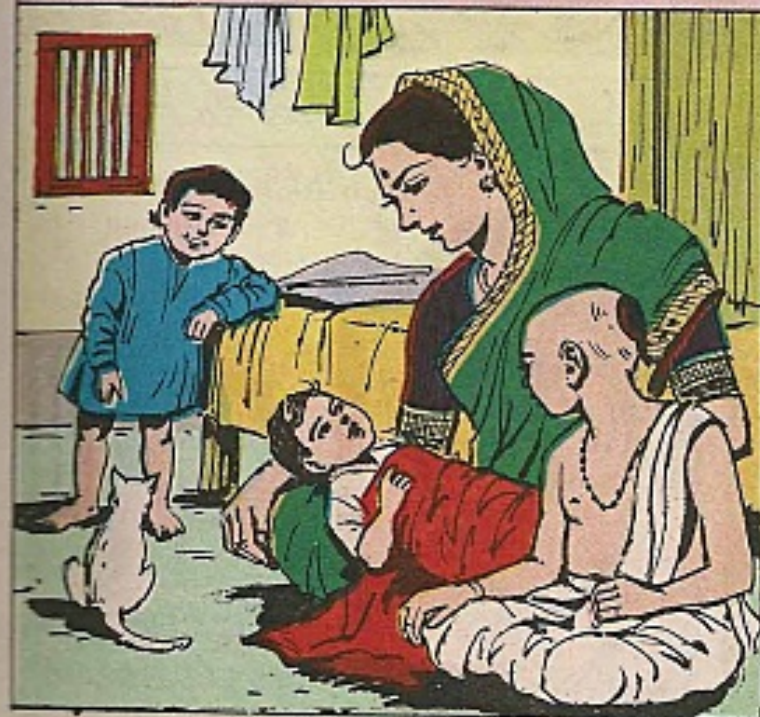
WHEN KANA WAS FULLY AWAKE,
BOLHOBA TOLD HER IN DETAIL
ABOUT THE VISION.

MY LORD, AT LAST
OUR DESIRE WILL
BE FULFILLED.

I HAD NO
DOUBT IT
WOULD BE,
KANA.



AS EACH OF THE THREE GODS HAD
PROMISED, KANA IN DUE COURSE
WAS BLESSED WITH THREE SONS—
SAVAJI THE GIFT OF SHIVA;
TUKARAM THE GIFT OF VISHNU; AND
KANHOBA THE GIFT OF BRAHMA.



THE BABIES SOON GREW UP INTO
STRONG BOYS.

WE ARE FORTUNATE.
SAVAJI, TUKARAM
AND KANHOBA ARE
GOOD BOYS AND
WILL LOOK AFTER
US WELL.

BEING THE
GIFT OF THE
GODS, THE BOYS
ARE ALL GOOD.
BUT ABOUT
LOOKING AFTER
US...WELL...





ONE DAY, YEARS LATER, BOLHOBA CALLED HIS ELDEST SON TO HIM.

SAVAJI, I AM GROWING OLD AND NEED HELP WITH MY BUSINESS. WILL YOU COME TO THE SHOP WITH ME EVERY DAY?

DEAR FATHER, FORGIVE ME... BUT BUSINESS DOES NOT INTEREST ME. I WOULD LIKE TO BE A SANYASI.

BOLHOBA HAD EXPECTED THIS.

I UNDERSTAND, SAVAJI, I UNDERSTAND. NEVER MIND. YOU MAY GO WITH MY BLESSINGS. I SHALL ASK TUKARAM TO HELP ME.

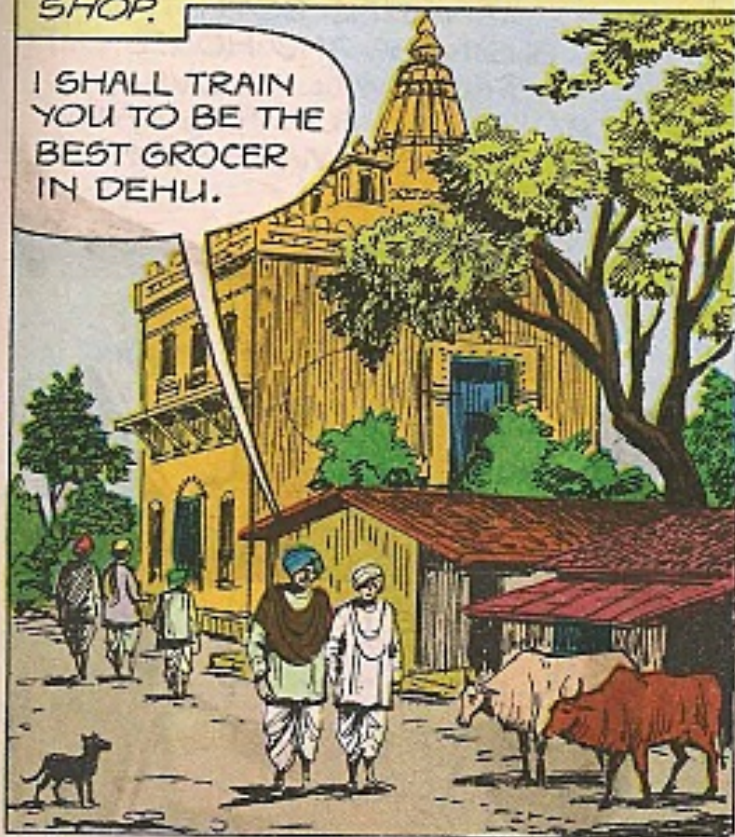
BOLHOBA SENT FOR TUKARAM.

TUKARAM, I NEED HELP AT THE SHOP. WILL YOU COME?

I WILL, FATHER. WHEN SHOULD I BEGIN?

BOLHOBHA WAS HAPPY. ALONG WITH TUKARAM, HE SET OUT FOR THE SHOP.

I SHALL TRAIN YOU TO BE THE BEST GROCER IN DEHU.



TUKARAM SOON MASTERED THE TRADE.

TUKARAM IS VERY HELPFUL TO ME.

ISN'T IT TIME WE GOT HIM MARRIED?
RAKHMABAI IS A GOOD GIRL AND HER FAMILY WILL AGREE TO THE MATCH.



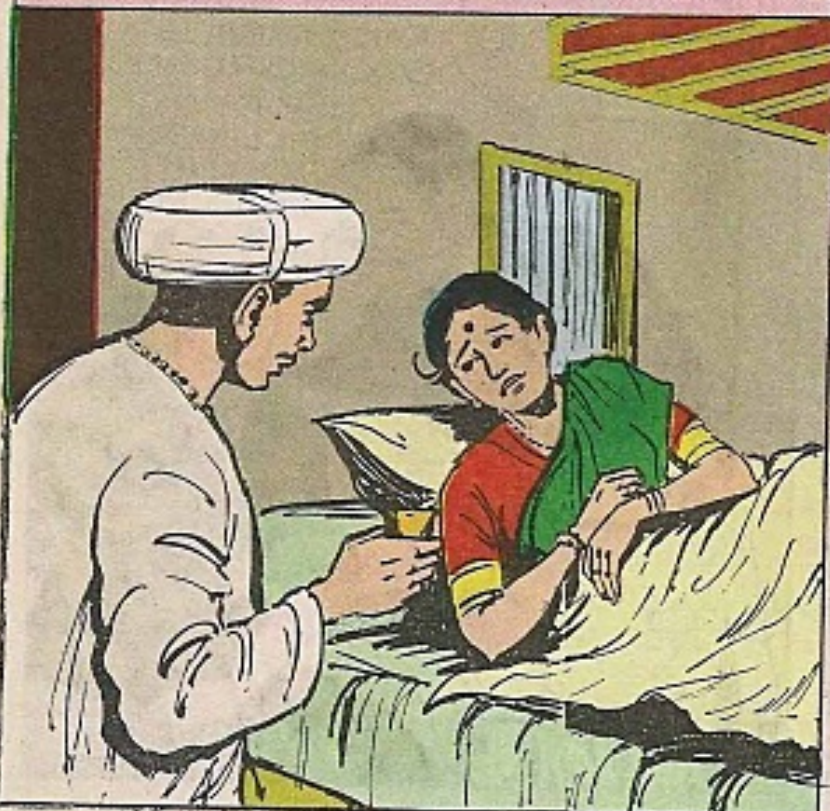
TUKARAM WAS MARRIED TO RAKHMABAI.



THEY HAD ONE SON WHOM THEY CALLED MAHADEV.



BUT RAKHMABAI, UNFORTUNATELY
SUFFERED FROM ASTHMA AND WOULD
BE BED-RIDDEN FOR MONTHS.



KANABAI WAS ANXIOUS FOR HER
SON.

MANAGING BOTH, THE
BUSINESS AND HOUSEHOLD
AFFAIRS WILL PROVE
TOO MUCH FOR TUKARAM.
POOR RAKHMA IS ALWAYS
ILL.



THAT'S TRUE, BUT
WHAT CAN WE
DO ABOUT IT?

WHY DON'T WE GET HIM MARRIED
AGAIN? WHEN WE ARE DEAD
AND GONE THERE WILL BE
SOMEONE TO LOOK AFTER
TUKARAM, AS WELL AS
RAKHMA AND
MAHADEV.

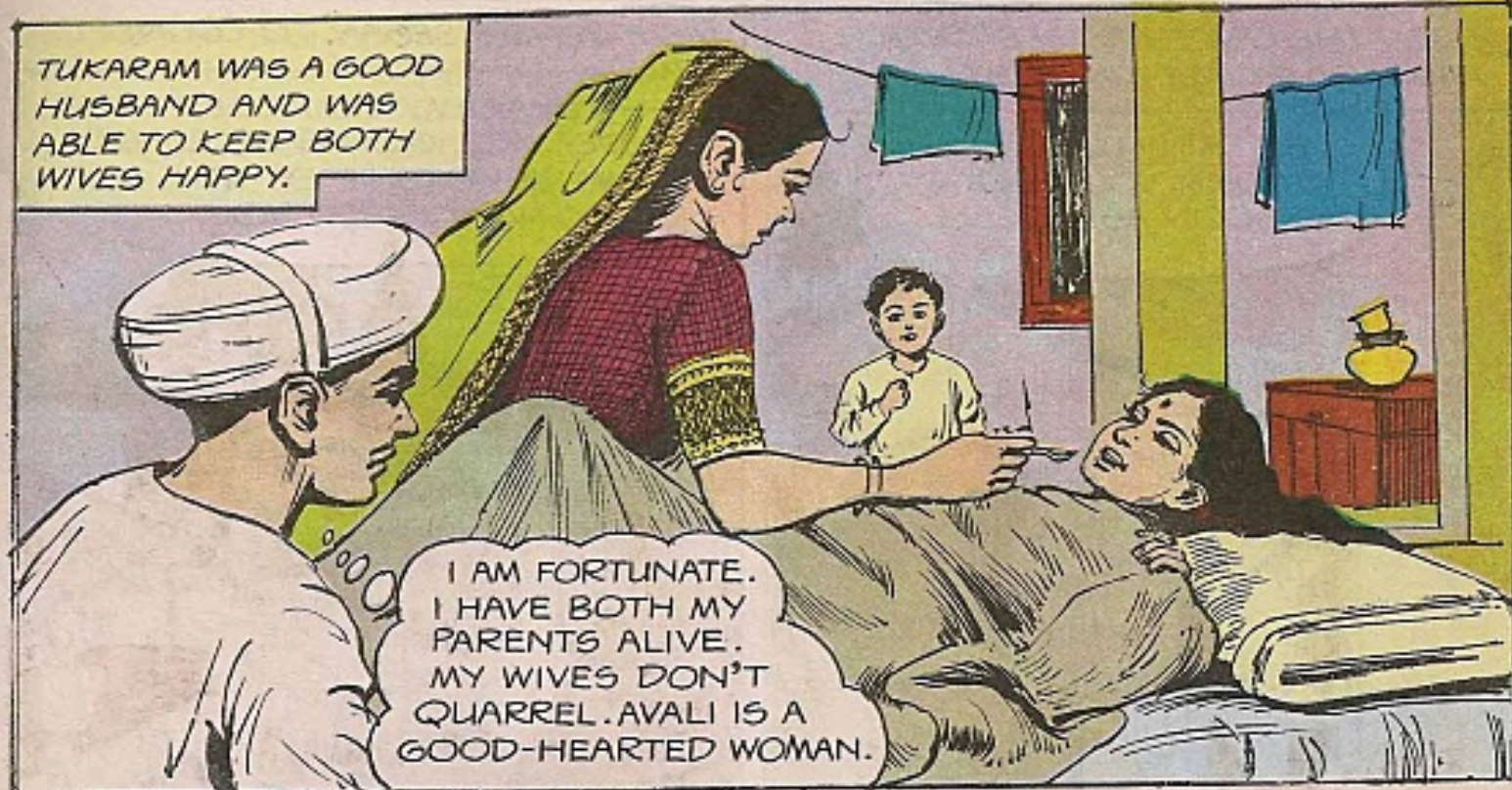
YOU ARE
RIGHT.



TUKARAM WAS MARRIED ONCE AGAIN.
THIS TIME TO AVALIBAI, THE DAUGHTER
OF A WEALTHY BANKER FROM
POONA.



TUKARAM WAS A GOOD HUSBAND AND WAS ABLE TO KEEP BOTH WIVES HAPPY.



I AM FORTUNATE. I HAVE BOTH MY PARENTS ALIVE. MY WIVES DON'T QUARREL. AVALI IS A GOOD-HEARTED WOMAN.

SHE MAY BE DIFFICULT WITH ME, AT TIMES. BUT HOW CONSIDERATE SHE IS TO RAKHMA; HOW LOVING TO LITTLE MAHADEV.



BUT TUKARAM'S HAPPINESS WAS SHORT-LIVED. WHEN HE WAS BARELY EIGHTEEN, BOTH HIS PARENTS DIED.



TUKARAM IN HIS GRIEF TURNED FOR SOLACE TO HIS FAVOURITE DEITIES, VITHOBA AND RAKHMABAI.



HE BEGAN NEGLECTING HIS BUSINESS. UNSCRUPULOUS PERSONS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THIS.

TUKARAM DOES NOT KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON. WE MUST TALK TO HIM.



POOR MAN. HOW HE TRUSTS PEOPLE.

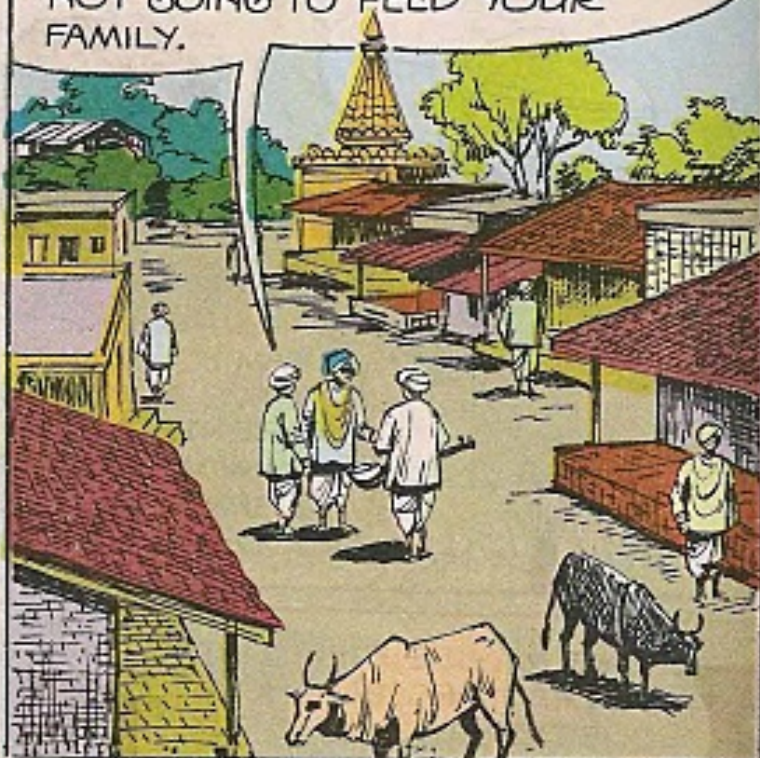
SOON THE ONCE PROSPEROUS FAMILY WAS DEEP IN DEBT.

BE PATIENT. WE WILL RETURN YOUR MONEY AS SOON AS WE CAN.



HIS FRIENDS BEGAN TO COUNSEL HIM.

TUKARAM, YOU ARE A HOUSEHOLDER. RELIGION IS NECESSARY BUT MERE WORSHIP OF VITHOBA IS NOT GOING TO FEED YOUR FAMILY.

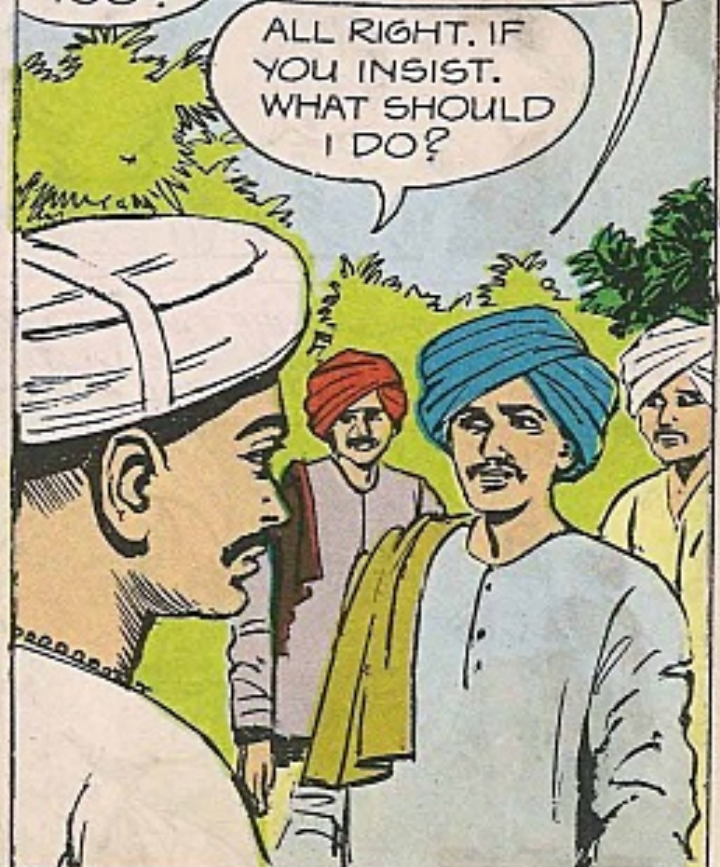


YOU ARE WRONG. VITHOBA WILL CERTAINLY COME TO MY AID IF THE NEED ARISES. RIGHT NOW IT ISN'T NECESSARY.



THAT'S TRUE. BUT SHOULDN'T YOU MAKE YOUR OWN EFFORTS TOO?

ALL RIGHT. IF YOU INSIST. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

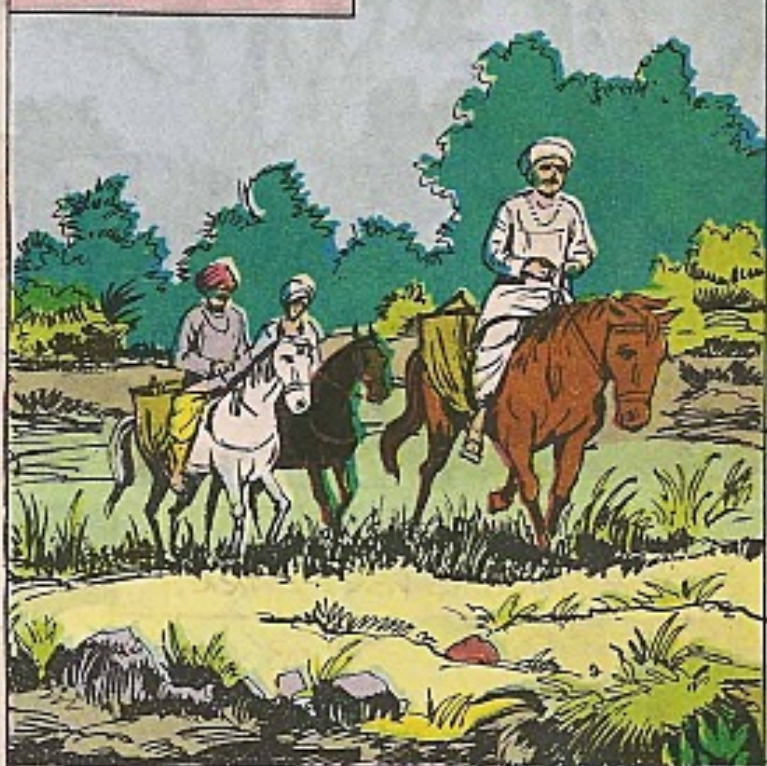


WE ARE GOING TO A FAR-OFF MARKET TO BUY GRAIN WHICH WE WILL SELL AT DEHU. WILL YOU WORK WITH US ON THE DEAL?

YES, IF YOU WANT ME TO.



TUKARAM WENT WITH THE TRADERS. THEY BOUGHT THE GRAIN AND SET OUT ON THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY, THROUGH THE JUNGLES.



ON THE WAY, TOWARDS EVENING, TUKARAM BROUGHT HIS HORSE TO A HALT AND DISMOUNTED.

WHAT IS THE MATTER?

IT'S TIME FOR MY EVENING PRAYERS.



HIS FRIENDS WERE ANNOYED.

THIS IS NO TIME FOR PRAYERS. IT WILL SOON BE DARK AND THESE PARTS ARE DANGEROUS. COME ON, FOLLOW US.



BUT TUKARAM HARDLY HEARD THEM FOR HE WAS ALREADY DEEP IN PRAYER.

HE IS A FOOL. COME ON, LET US LEAVE HIM WITH HIS PRAYERS AND HIS GRAIN TO THE MERCY OF THE JUNGLE. OUR FAMILIES HAVE TO BE FED.



WHEN TUKARAM FINISHED HIS PRAYERS, IT WAS VERY DARK.

MY FRIENDS HAVE DESERTED ME!



SUDDENLY A STREAK OF LIGHTNING LIT UP THE JUNGLE.



THERE WAS A CLAP OF THUNDER AND THE RAIN CAME DOWN IN TORRENTS.



HIS HORSE REARED IN FEAR AND THE HEAVY SACKS OF GRAIN FELL OFF ITS BACK.



TUKARAM CALLED OUT TO VITHOBA FROM THE DEPTHS OF HIS HEART.

LORD! HAVE YOU TOO DESERTED ME?



JUST THEN A STRANGER RODE UP.

YOUNG MAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING ALL ALONE IN THE JUNGLE AT THIS HOUR?

I AM A TRADER. MY FRIENDS DESERTED ME WHILE I WAS LOST IN PRAYER.



THE STRANGER DISMOUNTED.

COME. LET US LIFT THESE SACKS ON TO YOUR HORSE. I KNOW MY WAY WELL THROUGH THE JUNGLE. I WILL LEAD YOU OUT.

KIND STRANGER, IT IS NOBLE OF YOU TO HELP ME.



WHEN THE SACKS WERE LOADED THEY RODE OUT OF THE JUNGLE, THE STRANGER LEADING. BECAUSE IT WAS DARK IN THE JUNGLE TUKARAM HAD NOT SEEN HIS FACE.



BUT ONCE THEY WERE OUT OF THE JUNGLES—

LORD VITHOBA!
YOU...YOU...

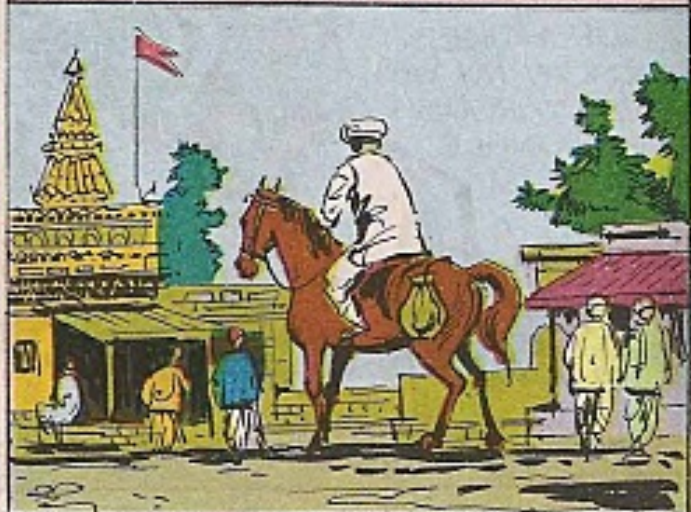


BUT BEFORE TUKARAM COULD SAY
ANYTHING MORE, THE STRANGER HAD
VANISHED.

... YOU REMEMBERED
ME, MY LORD!



TUKARAM RODE BACK TO DEHLI
MORE DEEPLY ENGROSSSED
THAN EVER IN HIS LORD.




THE NEXT YEAR THE RAINS FAILED AND A TERRIBLE FAMINE HIT THE REGION.
AT TUKARAM'S HOUSE—

MAHADEV HAS BEEN CRYING FOR FOOD.
I AM SINKING FAST. PLEASE BRING US
SOME FOOD.

OH, IT IS USELESS
PLEADING WITH HIM. IF HE
WERE NOT SO ABSORBED IN
VITHOBA WE WOULD NOT STARVE.
WE WOULD HAVE HAD MONEY TO BUY
GRAINS FROM THE SOUTH.

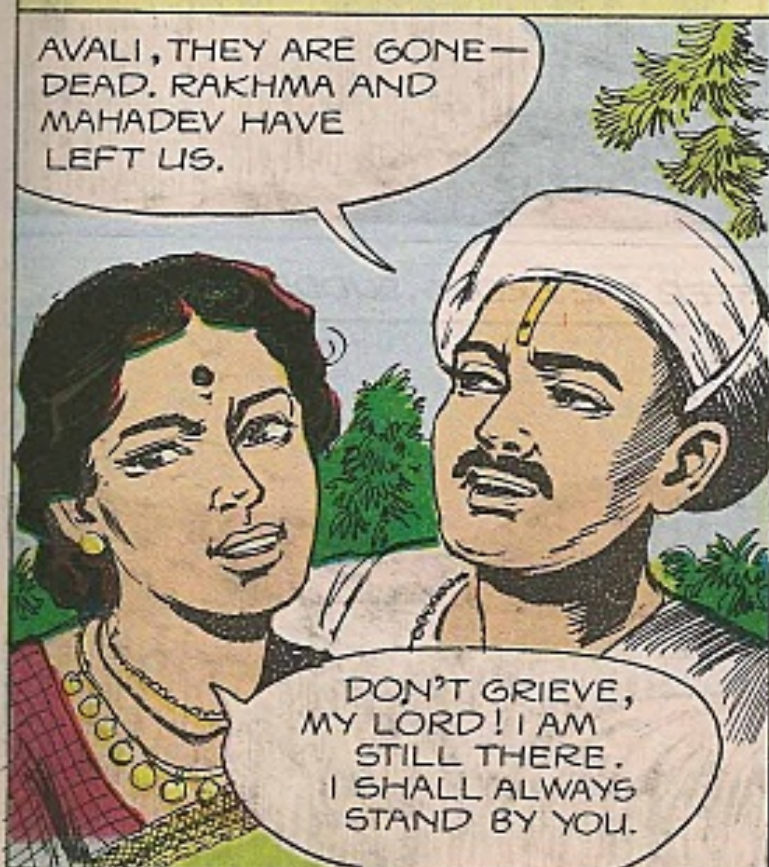


TUKARAM BORE THE CHARGES CALMLY. LATER —

A man in a white kurta and cap sits on the left, playing a stringed instrument. A woman in a green sari sits on the right, looking at him. The background shows a simple room with a brick wall and a doorway.

I HAVE TRIED MY BEST,
AVALI. OTHER FAMILIES
TOO ARE SUFFERING
LIKE US. IT IS
THE WILL OF
GOD.


THE AILING RAKHMA AND MAHADEV
COULD NOT HOLD OUT FOR LONG.

A close-up of the woman and man. The woman is on the left, looking at the man on the right. They both have expressions of grief.

AVALI, THEY ARE GONE—
DEAD. RAKHMA AND
MAHADEV HAVE
LEFT US.

DON'T GRIEVE,
MY LORD! I AM
STILL THERE.
I SHALL ALWAYS
STAND BY YOU.

TUKARAM WAS TOUCHED.

The man and woman are sitting together. The man is holding the woman's hands, and she is looking down with a sad expression. A red cloth hangs on the wall behind them.

I KNOW YOU WILL,
AVALI. YOU ARE A
GOOD WOMAN.

THE NEXT YEAR THE RAINS CAME AND WITH IT FRESH HOPE FOR THE END OF THE FAMINE. ONE DAY—

DEAR HUSBAND, IT IS EVERY MAN'S DUTY TO EARN A GOOD LIVING AND LEAD A COMFORTABLE LIFE.



THE CROPS ARE GOOD THIS YEAR AND EXTRA HANDS ARE NEEDED IN THE FIELDS. WHY DON'T YOU WORK FOR A FARMER?

I WILL TRY, AVALI.



SO TUKARAM STARTED WORKING FOR A FARMER.

THE CROPS ARE ALMOST READY FOR HARVESTING. IT WILL BE YOUR DUTY TO SHOO AWAY THE BIRDS FROM THE FIELDS.



BUT ALAS! TUKARAM, WHILE LOOKING AFTER THE CROPS, SUDDENLY FELL INTO A TRANCE.



WHEN THE FARMER CAME ON HIS ROUNDS, HE WAS FURIOUS.



WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING, YOU SCOUNDREL?

HE DRAGGED TUKARAM TO THE VILLAGE HEADMAN AND PUT THE CASE BEFORE HIM.

HE MUST PROMISE TO PAY ME TWO *KHANDIS OF GRAIN, THAT WOULD BE THE YIELD IF HE HAD NOT LET THE BIRDS GET AT THE CROPS.



THAT'S FAIR ENOUGH. AS FOR YOU, TUKARAM, WHATEVER IS LEFT OF THE CROPS IS YOURS.



WHEN AVALI HEARD THE NEWS SHE STOMPED UP TO THE FIELD.

I AM SORRY, AVALI. ANYWAY, LET THE BIRDS FINISH THEIR FEAST.

HOW CAN YOU? IF WE REAP WHAT IS LEFT, IT WILL AT LEAST FEED US FOR A FEW DAYS.



SO THEY BEGAN TO REAP THE CROPS.

AVALI, EVEN IF WE HAD LEFT THIS FOR THE BIRDS WE WOULD NOT HAVE STARVED. VITHOBA WOULD HAVE LOOKED AFTER US.



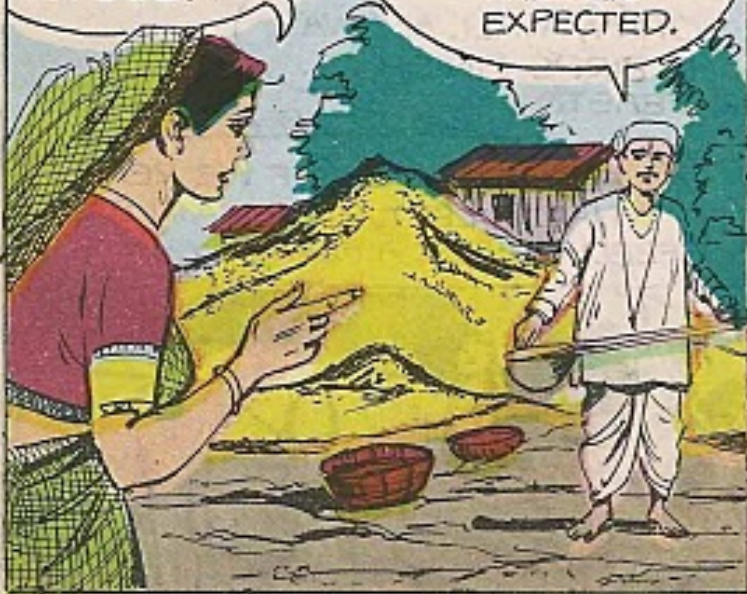
PLEASED WITH TUKARAM'S FAITH, VITHOBA DECIDED TO REWARD HIM.



WHEN THE PADDY WAS REAPED, AVALI AND TUKARAM WERE ASTONISHED.

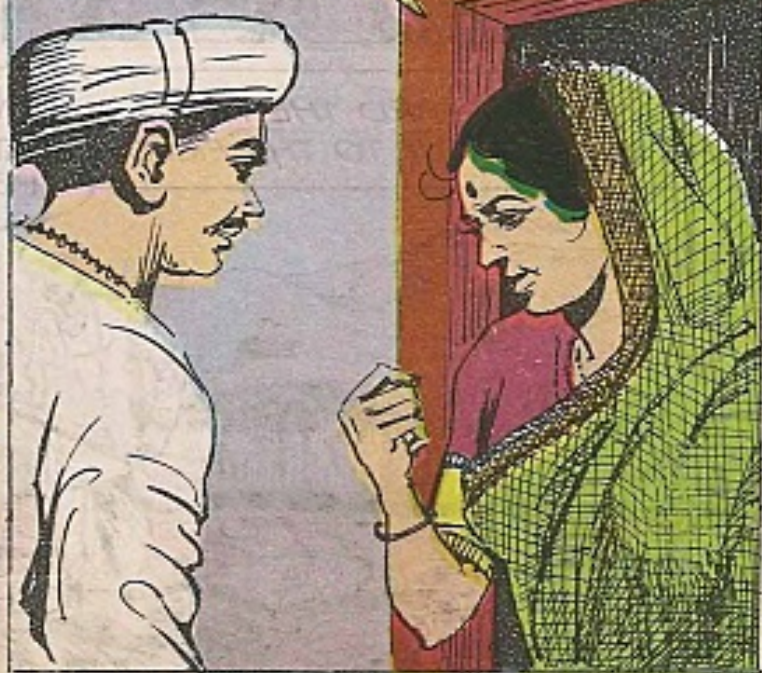
THERE ARE 18 KHANDIS OF GRAIN IN ALL, MY LORD! THE FARMER WAS A FOOL!

THIS IS A MIRACLE. VITHOBA...
18 KHANDIS! NINE TIMES THE QUANTITY THE FARMER EXPECTED.



AVALI LOOKED FORWARD TO ENJOYING THEIR WINDFALL.

LET US SELL THIS, PAY BACK THE FARMER AND LIVE A LIFE OF EASE WITH WHAT'S LEFT.



BUT TUKARAM HAD DIFFERENT IDEAS.

THE EXTRA BELONGS TO VITHOBA AND TO HIM IT SHALL GO! I SHALL USE THE MONEY TO RESTORE OUR ANCESTRAL TEMPLE OF VITHOBA.



AVASI WAS ANGRY. SHE RAVED AND RANTED.

AT THIS RATE I SHALL NEVER KNOW EASE. I AM DOOMED TO LIVE THE LIFE OF A LABOURER. VITHOBA, YOU ARE TO BLAME. IT IS YOUR FAULT.



BUT AFTER A WHILE SHE CALMED DOWN AND SIGHED HEAVILY.

WELL, I HAVE PROMISED TO STAND BY MY HUSBAND.

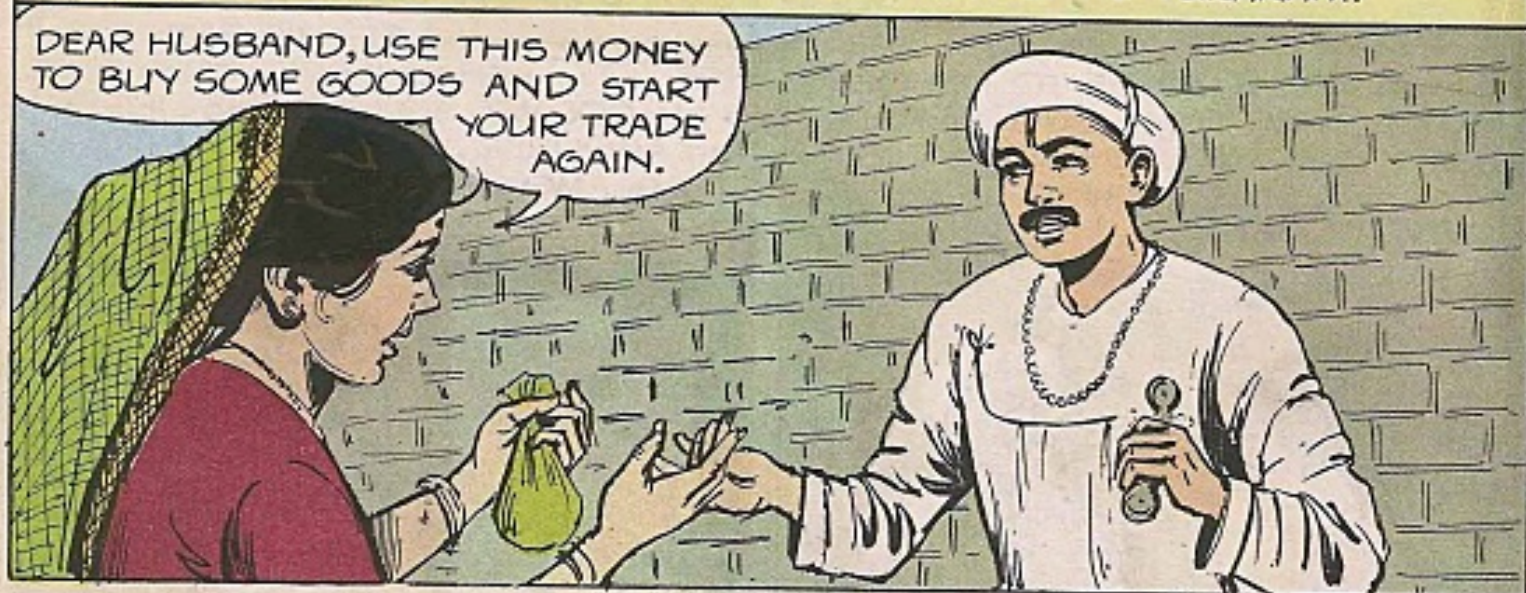


I'LL WRITE TO FATHER AND ASK HIM FOR A LOAN OF TWO HUNDRED RUPEES. THAT SHOULD ENABLE MY HUSBAND TO START HIS TRADING AFRESH.



A FEW DAYS LATER THE MONEY CAME. AVALI WENT UP TO TUKARAM.

DEAR HUSBAND, USE THIS MONEY
TO BUY SOME GOODS AND START
YOUR TRADE
AGAIN.



TUKARAM STARTED OUT WITH EVERY INTENTION OF PLEASING AVALI,
BUT ON THE WAY—

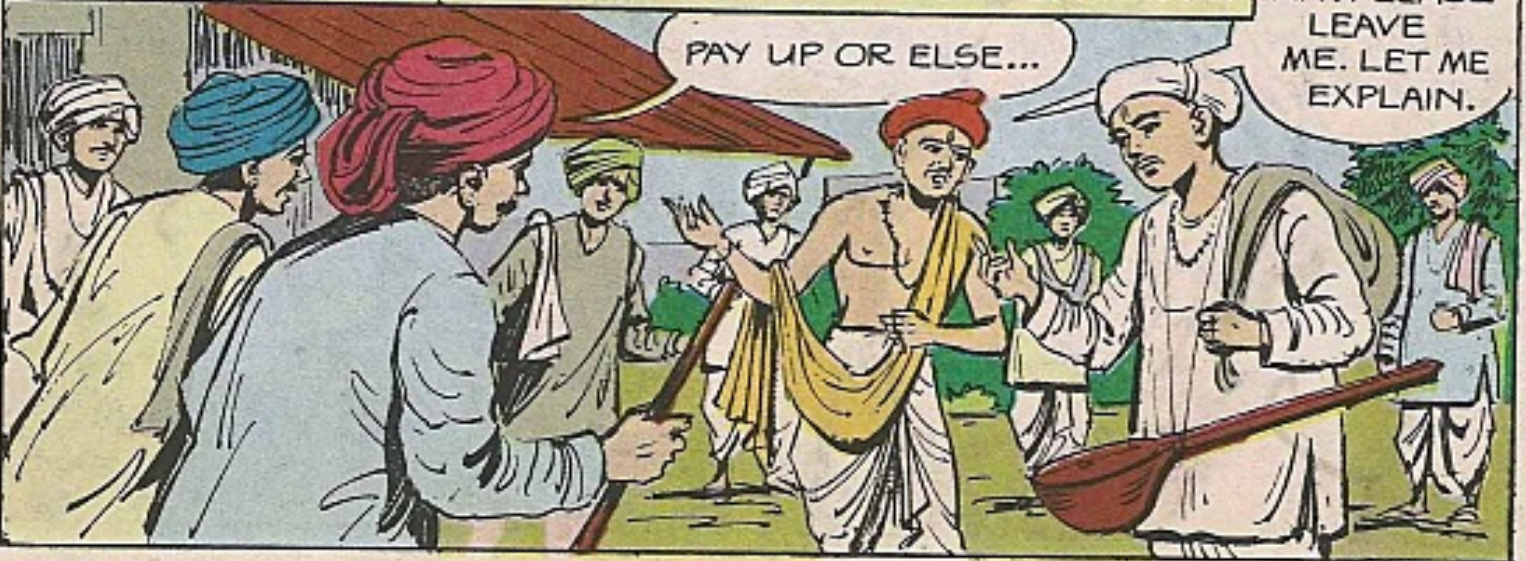
WHAT'S THAT
COMMOTION?



A GROUP OF PEOPLE WERE BELABOURING A MEEK BRAHMAN.

PAY UP OR ELSE...

AH! PLEASE
LEAVE
ME. LET ME
EXPLAIN.



TUKARAM RAN TO THE BRAHMAN'S AID.

STOP! STOP THIS AT ONCE,
I SAY. WHAT HAS HE
DONE TO DESERVE
THIS?

HE OWES US
MONEY AND
REFUSES TO PAY.

THE BRAHMAN PROTESTED.

THAT'S NOT
TRUE. I WANT
TO PAY. BUT
I CAN'T.

TUKARAM TURNED TO THE
CREDITORS.

HOW MUCH
DOES HE
OWE YOU?

TWO
HUNDRED
RUPEES
IN ALL.

TUKARAM DID NOT
HESITATE FOR A
MOMENT.

HERE, TAKE THIS AND
LEAVE HIM ALONE.

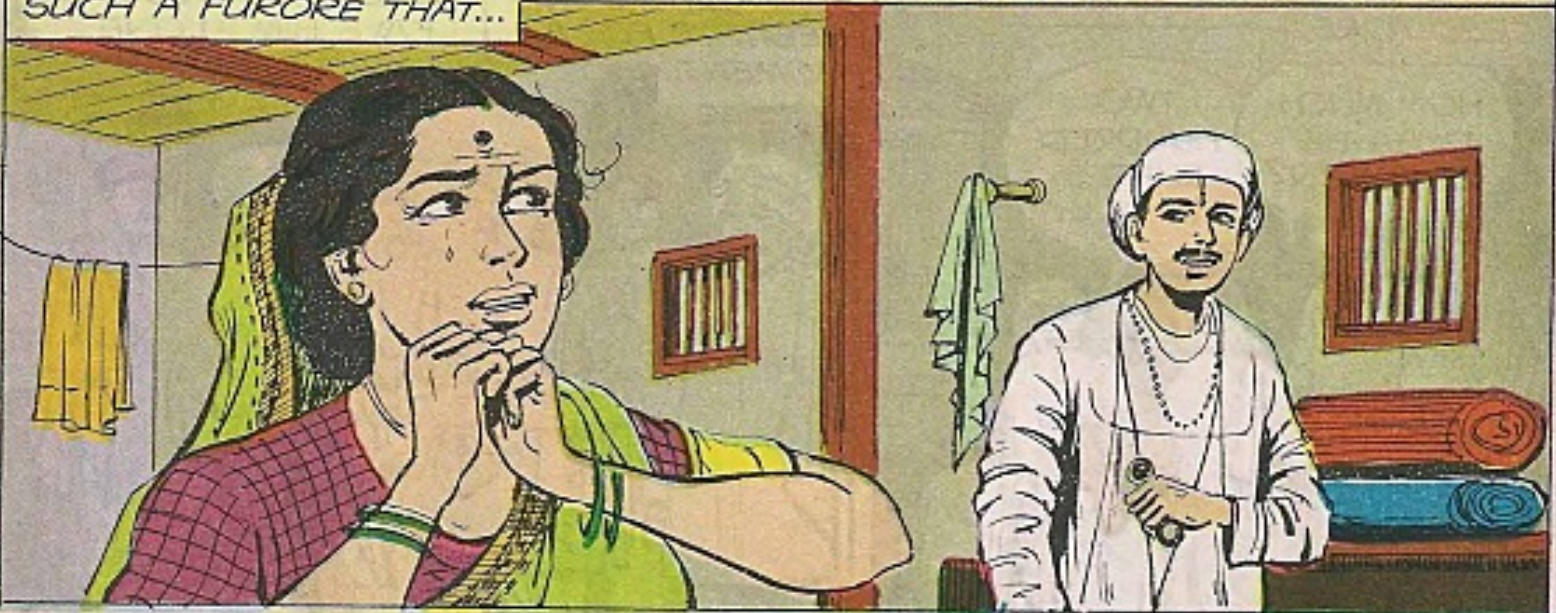
YOU HAVE SAVED
MY LIFE. I AM
GRATEFUL TO YOU.

DO NOT BE GRATEFUL TO ME.
IT WAS LORD VITHOBA WHO
CAME TO YOUR AID. HE GUIDED
ME TO YOU. OFFER
YOUR THANKS
TO HIM.

AND TUKARAM RETURNED HOME. AVALI WAS EAGERLY WAITING FOR HIM.



WHEN AVALI HEARD WHAT HE HAD DONE SHE CURSED HIM AND CREATED SUCH A FURORE THAT...



...ALL THE VILLAGERS CAME OUT.



WHEN THEY LEARNT THE WHOLE STORY THEY WERE CONVINCED OF ONE THING.

HE IS A MADMAN! LET US
GIVE HIM HIS DUE.



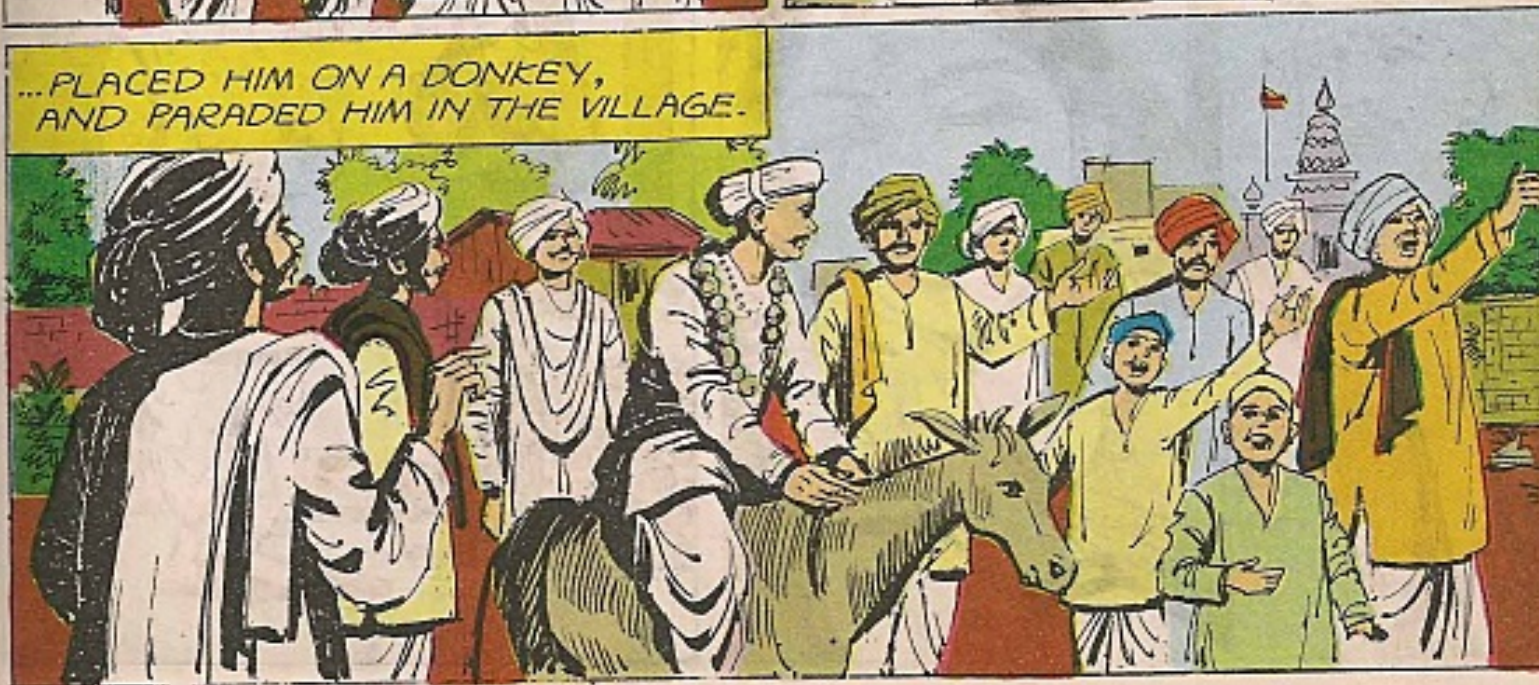
THEY GRABBED THE ASTONISHED
TUKARAM...



...PUT A STRING OF ONIONS ROUND
HIS NECK...



...PLACED HIM ON A DONKEY,
AND PARADED HIM IN THE VILLAGE.

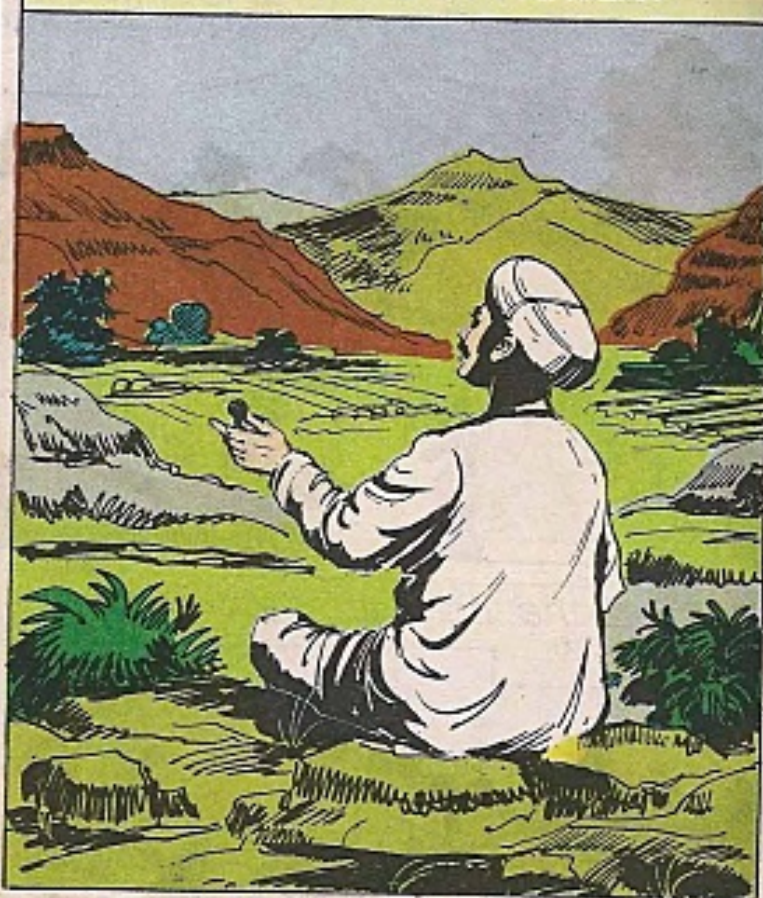


THE MISERABLE TUKARAM SOMEHOW
MANAGED TO SHAKE OFF HIS
TORMENTORS.

I'D BETTER RUN AWAY
TO THE HILLS. THEY WILL
NOT FOLLOW ME THERE.



ONCE IN THE SAFETY OF THE
HILLS TUKARAM SPENT HIS DAYS
IN MEDITATION AND IN PRAYER.



MEANWHILE, AVALI RETURNED HOME.
KANHOBA WAS WAITING FOR HER.

WHY ARE YOU WEEPING?
WHERE IS TUKA DADA?



AVALI BROKE DOWN AND TOLD
HIM ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED.

DEAR BROTHER, WHAT HAVE
THEY DONE TO YOU? I SHALL
FIND YOU AND
BRING
YOU
BACK IN
HONOUR.



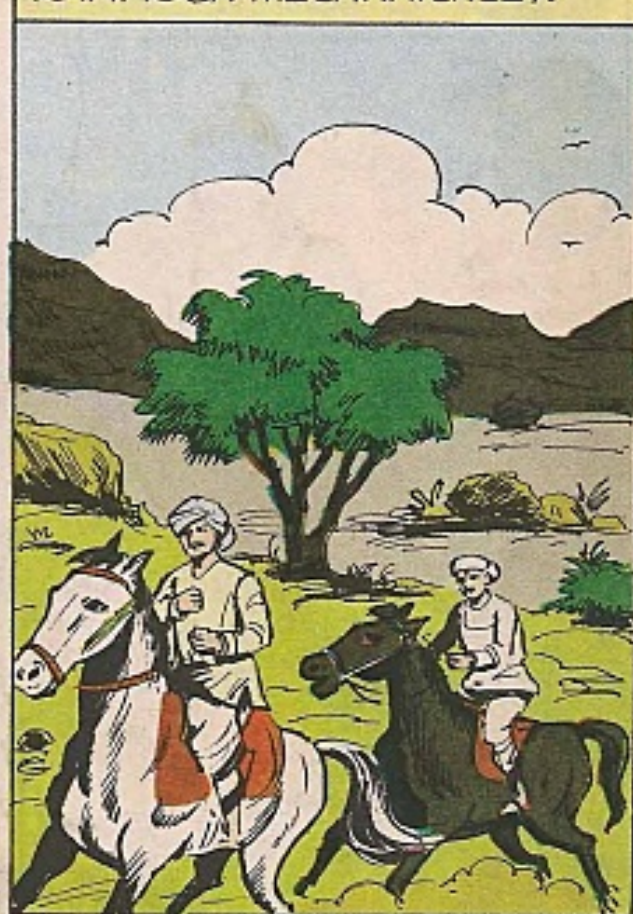
AFTER A LONG SEARCH, KANHOBA FOUND TUKARAM.

BROTHER, I HAVE COME TO TAKE YOU BACK HOME.

AS YOU WISH.



AND TUKARAM FOLLOWED KANHOBA MECHANICALLY.



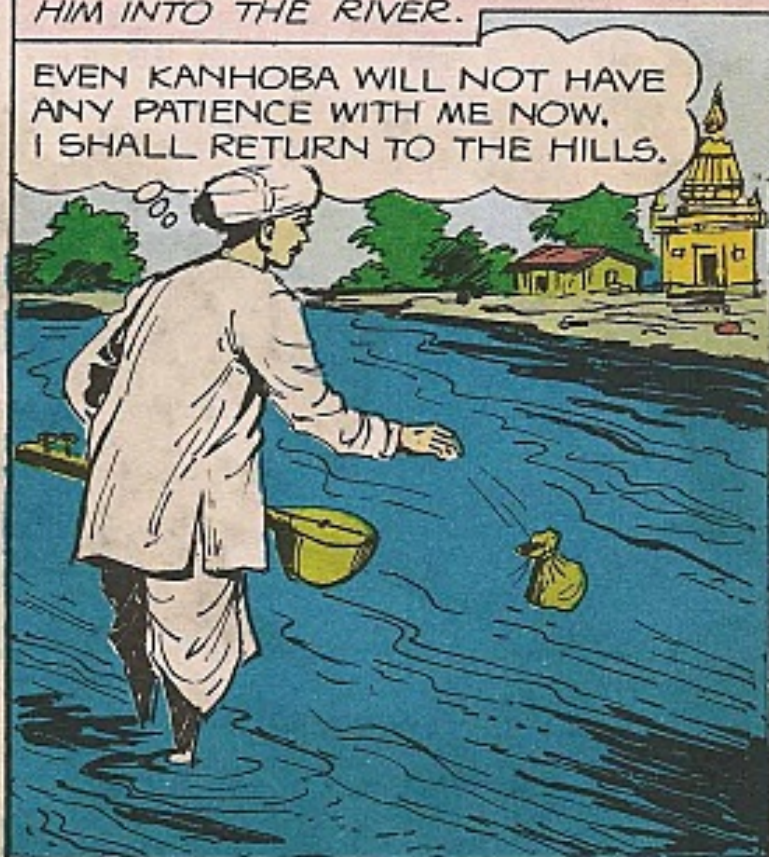
BACK AT DEHU, KANHOBA, A CLEVER PRACTICAL YOUTH, SOON REVIVED THE FAMILY BUSINESS AND BECAME PROSPEROUS.

TUKA DADA, YOU ARE NOW A RICH MAN. HERE IS YOUR SHARE.



TUKARAM WOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH WORLDLY MATTERS AND FLUNG WHAT KANHOBA HAD GIVEN HIM INTO THE RIVER.

EVEN KANHOBA WILL NOT HAVE ANY PATIENCE WITH ME NOW. I SHALL RETURN TO THE HILLS.



ONCE IN THE HILLS TUKARAM INTENSIFIED HIS MEDITATION AND PRAYERS. AT LAST HE ACHIEVED ENLIGHTENMENT. VITHOBA CAME TO HIM IN A DREAM.



PURE SAINT, WAKE UP. WHEN NAMDEO WAS ON EARTH, HE MADE A VOW TO WRITE A LAKH OF DEVOTIONAL VERSES. HE DIED BEFORE HE COULD WRITE ALL OF THEM. YOU, TUKARAM HAVE MY BLESSINGS.

YOU SHALL HAVE THE POWER TO COMPLETE THE UNFINISHED WORK.

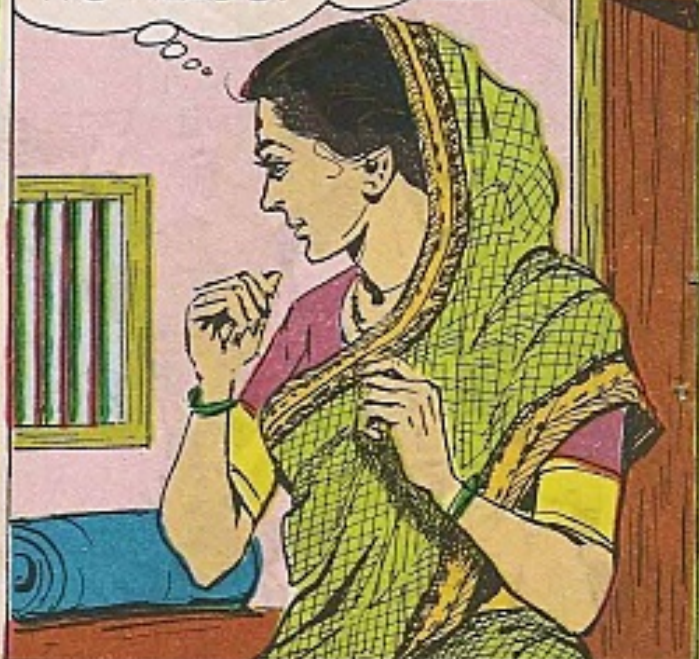
TUKARAM WOKE UP INSPIRED. HE BEGAN THE TASK OF WRITING HIS POEMS.

I TOO LIKE NAMDEO SHALL USE THE ABHANG METRE.



MEANWHILE THE LOYAL AVALI MADE A DECISION.

I HAVE PROMISED TO STAND BY MY HUSBAND. IF HE WILL NOT COME TO DEHU, I SHALL GO UP TO THE HILLS EACH DAY AND LOOK AFTER HIS NEEDS.



SHE SOUGHT AND FOUND HIM.



WHY DO YOU TORMENT ME? WHY CAN'T YOU BE LIKE ANY NORMAL HUSBAND? PLEASE EAT THIS. I HAVE BROUGHT YOU SOME FOOD. AND I SHALL BRING IT FOR YOU EVERY DAY.



AND AVALI KEPT HER PROMISE. ONE DAY AS SHE WAS ON HER WAY TO THE HILLS—



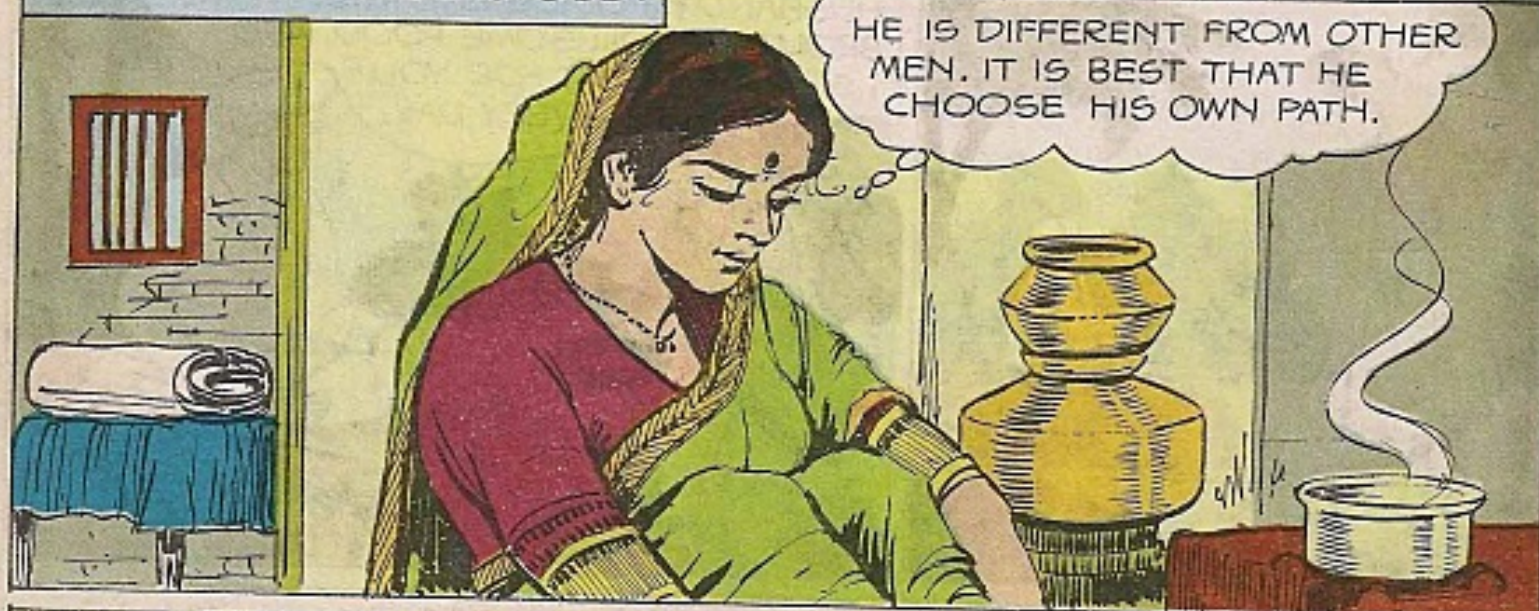
AH...H..H...E..E...!
A THORN. I WILL PULL IT OUT AND WALK ON. MY HUSBAND MUST BE HUNGRY.

TUKARAM WAS TOUCHED WHEN HE SAW THE BLEEDING FOOT.



NO. I CANNOT LET YOU SUFFER LIKE THIS FOR ME. I SHALL RETURN WITH YOU TO DEHU.

BUT HE COULD NO LONGER RETURN TO THE GROCERY BUSINESS AND THIS TIME AVALI UNDERSTOOD.



EVERY MORNING TUKARAM WENT TO THE HILLS AND IN SOLITUDE COMPOSED HIS ABHANGS.



HE IS A SAINT. LET US LISTEN TO HIS KIRTANS INSTEAD OF MAMBAJI'S SERMONS.



MAMBAJI SEETHED WITH JEALOUSY.

EVER SINCE THAT UPSTART TUKARAM
STARTED HIS KIRTANS MY
EARNINGS HAVE DWINDLED.
I MUST TEACH HIM
A LESSON.



HE DID NOT HAVE TO WAIT LONG
FOR AN OPPORTUNITY. ONE DAY—

SIR, TUKARAM'S
COW HAS
ENTERED YOUR
FIELDS AND
DAMAGED THE
CROPS.



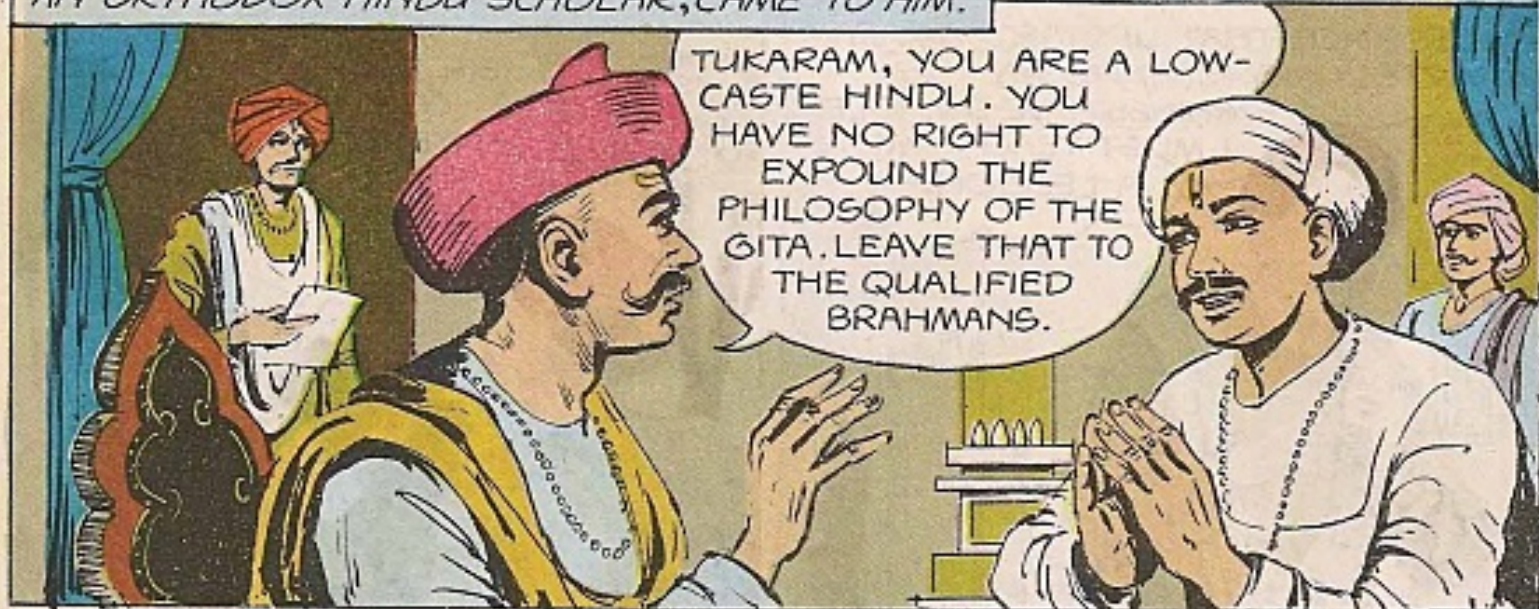
MAMBAJI, WAITING FOR JUST SUCH A CHANCE, GRABBED
A STICK AND RAN TO THE FIELD.



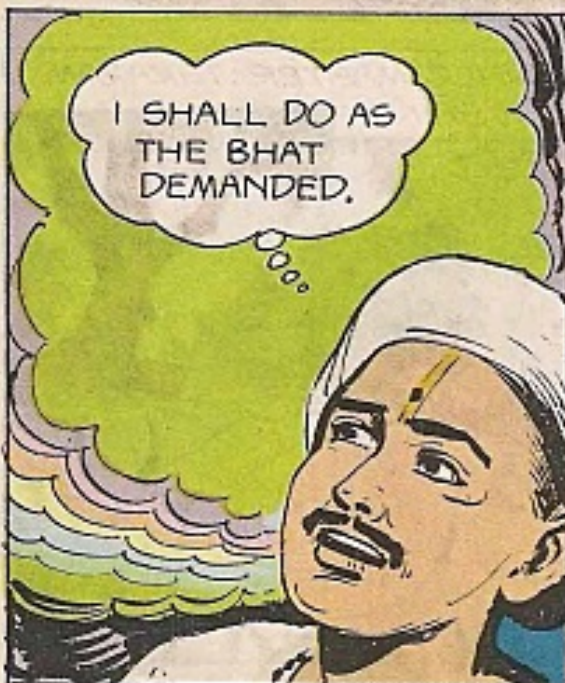
THERE, HE MERCILESSLY BEAT BOTH THE COW AND HER MASTER. TUKARAM
DID NOT UTTER A CRY. HE HAD TRULY BECOME A SAINT.



BUT MAMBAJI WAS NOT HIS ONLY ENEMY. ONE DAY RAMESHWAR BHAT, AN ORTHODOX HINDU SCHOLAR, CAME TO HIM.



THEN—



AND TUKARAM BEGAN HIS FAST
ON THE RIVER BANK.

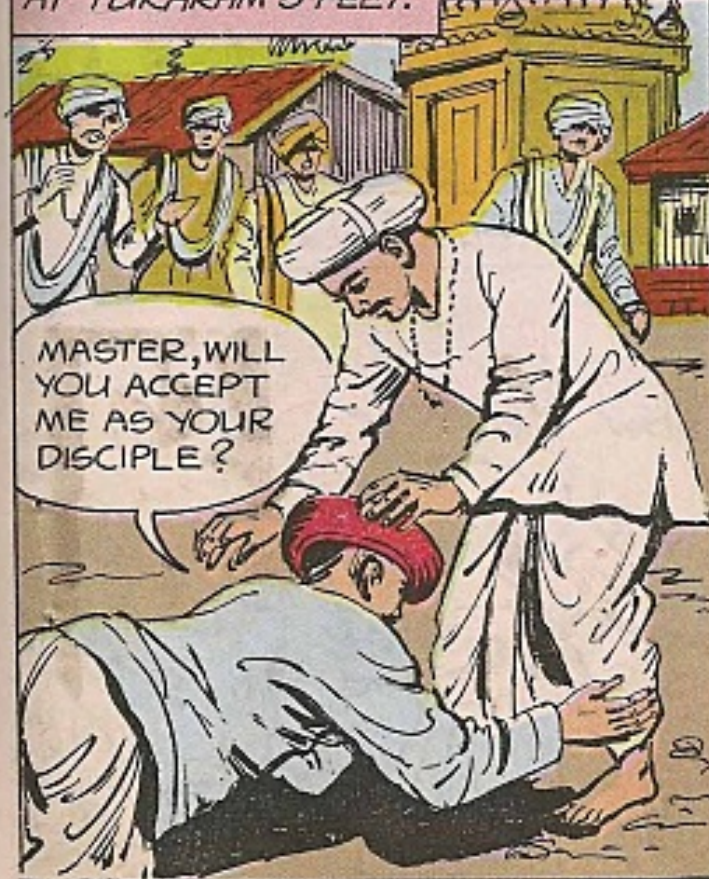


TWELVE DAYS
LATER—

I AM INDRAYANI, GODDESS
OF THIS RIVER. MOVED BY
YOUR DEVOTION, I HAVE
COME TO RESTORE YOUR
WORK TO YOU.



WHEN RAMESHWAR BHAT HEARD
OF THIS, HE CAME AND FELL
AT TUKARAM'S FEET.



AND SO TUKARAM CONTINUED
TEACHING AND PREACHING.



TUKARAM AND HIS ABHANGS BECAME SO FAMOUS THAT EVEN THE GREAT SHIVAJI BECAME HIS DISCIPLE. ONE DAY -




AS THEY SEARCHED FOR SHIVAJI, IN THE AUDIENCE, SUDDENLY -

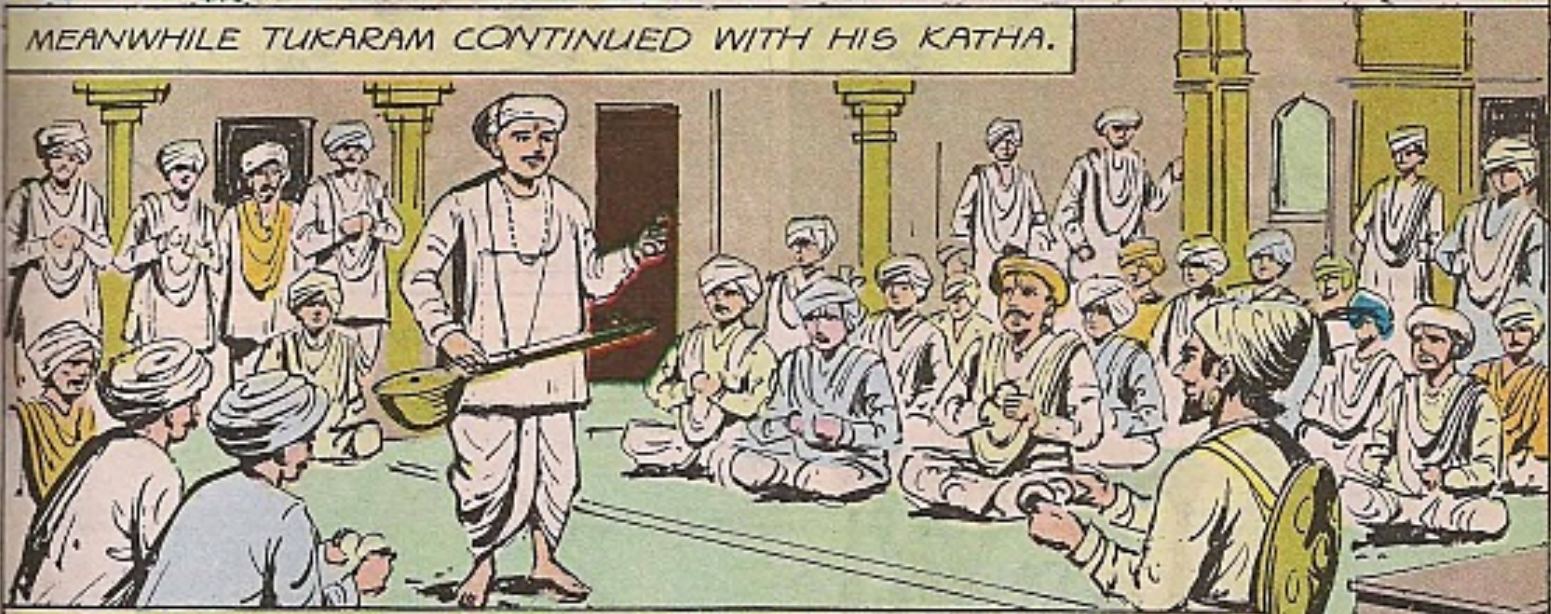


THEY GAVE CHASE BUT NEVER SUCCEEDED IN CATCHING HIM. FOR IT WAS VITHOBA WHO HAD ONCE AGAIN COME TO PROTECT HIS DEVOTEE.

I SHALL LEAD THEM INTO THE FORESTS, WHERE I SHALL DIS-
APPEAR. THAT WILL PERPLEX
THEM.

A man in a yellow robe and turban is riding a white horse. He is leading a group of people on horseback into a forest. In the background, there are mountains and a large tree on the left. A speech bubble from the man on the horse contains the text: "I SHALL LEAD THEM INTO THE FORESTS, WHERE I SHALL DIS-APPEAR. THAT WILL PERPLEX THEM."

MEANWHILE TUKARAM CONTINUED WITH HIS KATHA.

Tukaram, a man in a white dhoti and turban, is standing and performing Katha. He is holding a small drum (mridanga) and a stringed instrument (veena). A large group of devotees, mostly men in white clothing and turbans, are sitting on the floor, listening attentively. The setting appears to be an open courtyard or a large hall with pillars.

WHEN IT WAS OVER, SHIVAJI RETURNED HOME UNMOLESTED.

TUKARAM TAUGHT AND PREACHED FOR MANY YEARS. THEN SUDDENLY ONE FINE MORNING—

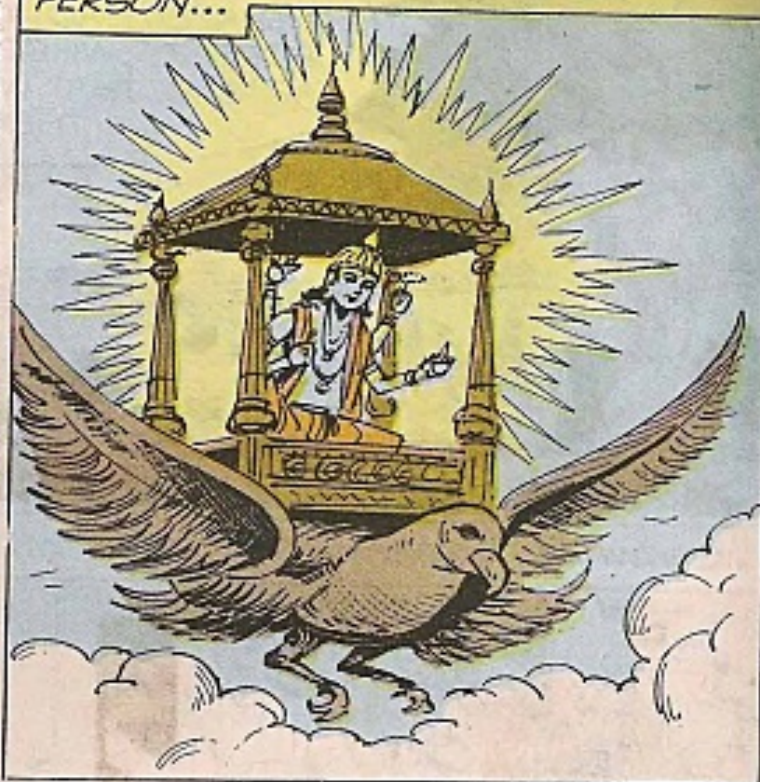
AVALI, I HAVE COME
TO BID YOU
FAREWELL.
I AM GOING
TO VAIKUNTHA.

A close-up of Tukaram and his wife Avali. Tukaram, on the left, is wearing a white turban and a white shirt. Avali, on the right, is wearing a green sari with a red and yellow border. She has a bindi on her forehead. A speech bubble from Tukaram contains the text: "AVALI, I HAVE COME TO BID YOU FAREWELL. I AM GOING TO VAIKUNTHA."

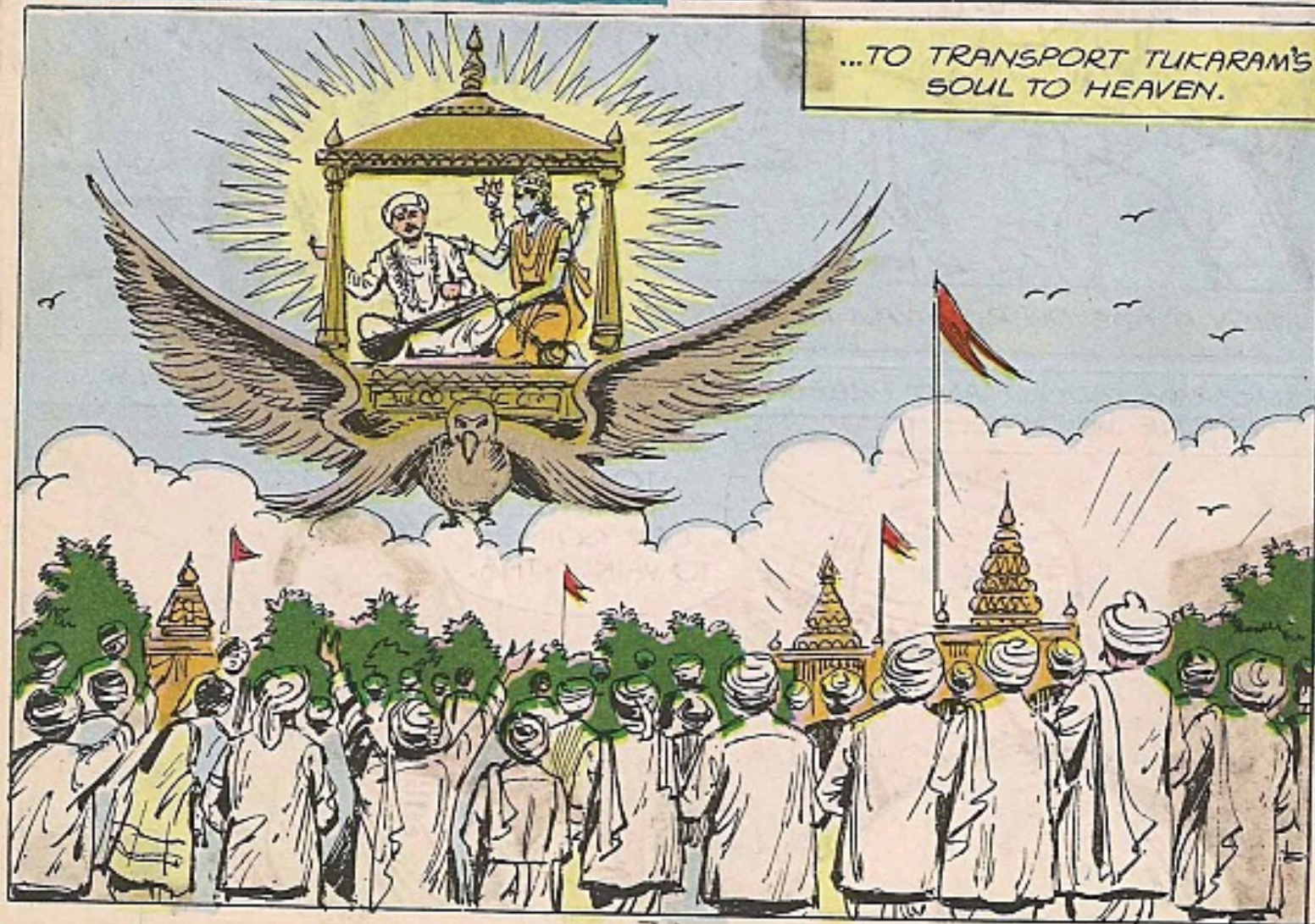
HE WENT TO THE BANKS OF THE
INDRAYANI AND ENTERING THE
WATER GAVE UP HIS BODY.



AS TUKARAM'S SPIRIT ROSE FROM
HIS BODY, SHRI VISHNU CAME IN
PERSON...



...TO TRANSPORT TUKARAM'S
SOUL TO HEAVEN.



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By the way, 12 of the characters featured in the illustrations do not have any names. For example, do you know who's chewing Chiclets when he is not with Josephine? If not, ask your friends. That's an additional lot of fun from the Chiclets Laugh 'n Chew pack!